

## **Task Force on the Future for Growth & Development**

### **Education Workgroup**

April 2010

#### **Current members:**

David Carey, Jim Cohen, Sandy Coyman, Candace Donoho and Les Knapp.

From MDP; Steve Allan, Amanda Conn, Peter G. Conrad, Jenny King and Sharon Reichlyn.

#### **Progress Report:**

Since providing the Task force with Smart Growth Education Course recommendations in July 2009, the work group has been involved with the following projects:

##### Planning Commission, Planning Board and Board of Appeals Education Course:

The Smart and Sustainable Growth Act of 2009 passed by the Maryland General Assembly requires local jurisdiction's (county or municipal) Planning Commission/Board and Board of Appeals members to complete an education course on or before July 1, 2010. The course was launched online a few days before the January 1, 2010 deadline. The Education workgroup developed a set of recommendations for content, format and length to guide the MDP in the development of the course. The workgroup also participated in reviewing the draft modules of the course after it was crafted by MDP. The course is designed to be accessed online and has an online review component.

As of mid-March 237 users had registered, 46 had completed the course and an additional 43 were being verified. MDP has received feedback ranging from positive comments to suggestions that the training is too long and too policy oriented. In addition, several jurisdictions requested hard copies of the training course. There have been discussions between MDP, MML and local governments to provide in person training before the July 1 deadline. Some jurisdictions have either developed their own course (Cumberland, Prince Georges County) or have utilized courses offered by third parties. The work group has made additional recommendations for mechanisms to bring the education course out to Planning Commission/Board and Board of Appeals members.

##### Smart growth education:

The workgroup is continuing to look beyond the audience of Planning Commission/Board and Board of Appeals members. Some discussion has focused on training for elected officials through the Institute for Government Services. One option would be to develop a smart growth curriculum as an elective course offering.

Another part of the workgroup's investigation has been to research and review existing videos about smart growth and planning issues. Several videos have been reviewed by the group. Like the curriculum concept, the development of a Maryland educational video will require the identification of the resources to make it happen.

The final area of recent investigation has been towards the development of a smart growth curriculum for schools. This could be modeled after some of the “Chesapeake Bay” curriculum that appears in many Maryland schools. Such a curriculum could fall along the continuum from a “portable module” to developing a statewide requirement.

2010 Work Plan:

- Assist the Maryland Department of Planning in its efforts to expand the opportunities for classroom settings for the existing education course
- Contact organizations that offer continuing education opportunities for elected officials
- Complete the inventory of existing training courses (free/paid)
- Determine most viable option for development of smart growth curriculum
- Frame an overall smart growth marketing campaign